

Claims 1-68 are pending in this application, and claims 1 and 34 are independent. Of the pending claims, claims 7, 10, 15, 19, 22, 42, 45, 50, 54, and 57 have been withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected species.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejections

In the Office Action, claims 1-6, 8, 11-12, 14, 16-18, 20-21, 23-41, 43, 46, 48-49, 51-53, 55-56, and 58-68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0011251 to Gueret (hereinafter "Gueret '251"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 1 and its dependent claims recite an applicator element comprising, among other things, at least one bundle of bristles, "the bundle being split into at least two sub-bundles" Claim 34 and its dependent claims recite an applicator element comprising, among other things, at least one bundle of bristles, "the bundle being split into at least a first sub-bundle . . . and a second sub-bundle"

During the personal interview, the Examiner agreed that these features of the claimed inventions were not disclosed or rendered obvious by the prior art. See Interview Summary of July 30, 2008. Accordingly, for at least this reason, the rejection of claims 1-6, 8, 11-12, 14, 16-18, 20-21, 23-41, 43, 46, 48-49, 51-53, 55-56, and 58-68 should be withdrawn.

Claims 9, 13, 44, and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gueret '251.

These claims depend from either independent claim 1 or independent claim 34. Accordingly, they are allowable over Gueret '251 for at least the same reason explained above.